Met Office

NEWS

Cold winds and snow

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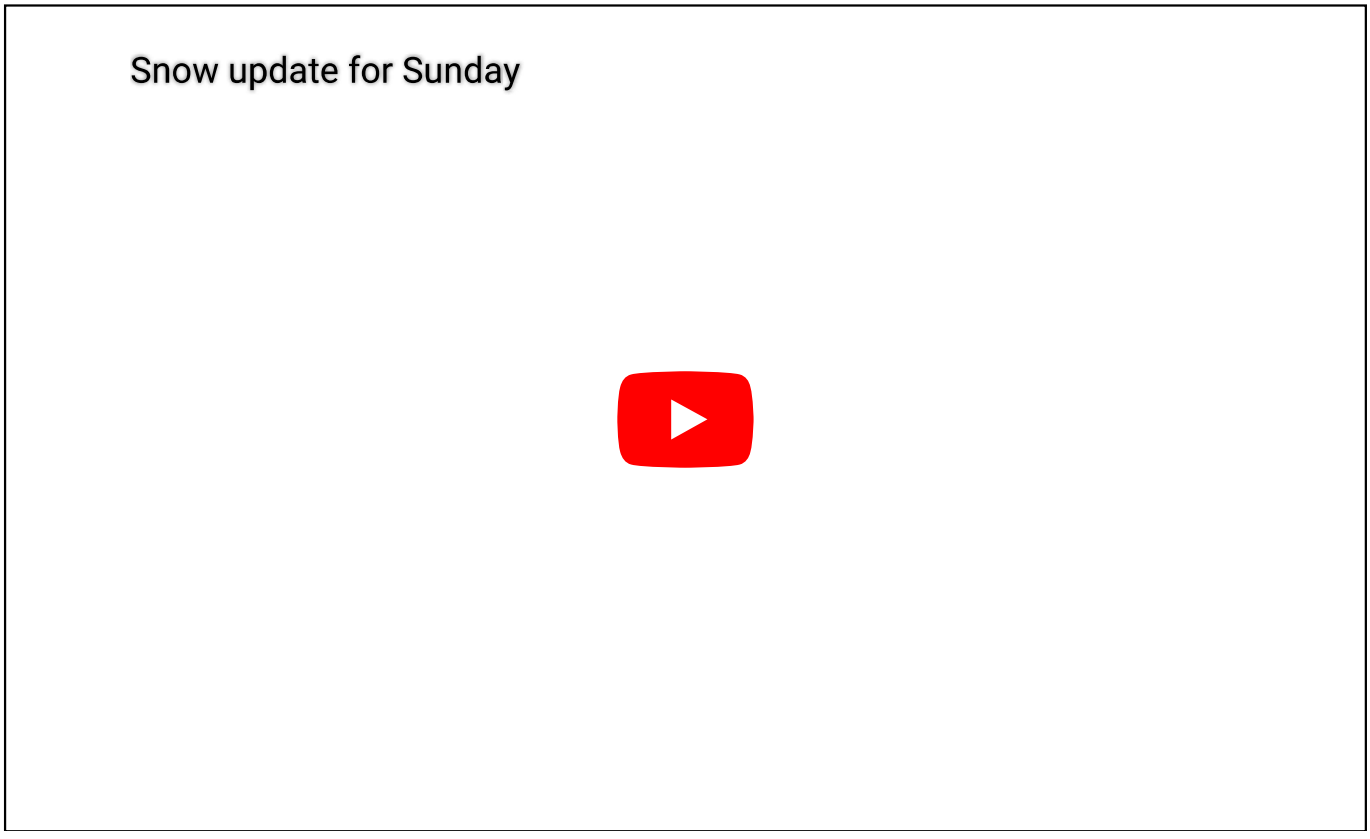
Bitterly cold weather and snow are affecting much of the UK this weekend

There will be widespread overnight frosts which will be severe and penetrating in some areas.

A number of Yellow and Amber National Severe Weather Warnings are in place featuring snow, snow and ice and ice with a risk the snow could be disruptive in some areas.

High pressure over Scandinavia is the reason for the return of the cold conditions but it is not anticipated to be as severe, prolonged or disruptive as the weather at the end of February.

Bitter easterly winds mean tha,t not only is the country facing very low temperatures, but also a significant wind chill risk throughout the weekend, making it feel several degrees colder than thermometers show.



Snow showers continue to move westwards on Sunday across England and Wales, as well as some eastern parts of Scotland and southern parts of Northern Ireland.

Met Office Chief Meteorologist Frank Saunders, said: "It will stay bitterly cold with temperatures only reaching 0 °C to 3 °C widely this weekend, with snow showers for many.

"The heaviest snow is expected overnight tonight and tomorrow morning (Sunday) with around 5 – 10cms of snow within the warning areas, with a chance of 15 cm over higher ground. The snow could be disruptive in places, perhaps most likely in the southwest of England and southeast Wales and ice is a risk on untreated roads and pavements. It will stay bitterly cold and windy throughout Sunday with sunshine".

Snow and winds ease by Monday, though overnight frost and some ice will occur.

Richard Leonard, Highways England Head of Road Safety, said: "Gritters will be out treating our roads around the clock, but it is still important to drive to the conditions when snow is forecast.

"Keep your distance and reduce your speed, because even in conditions that seem normal, and where the snow is not settling, it can be slippery if ice patches have formed, or where fresh grit has not been worked into the carriageway.

"Drivers should plan their journeys, monitor weather reports and pack a snow kit of blankets, food, water and a shovel."

The weekend will also be windy for much of the UK with gales likely in places. With the wind coming from the east, wind chill will be factor for many, making it feel even colder.

Public Health England have issued a Level 3 Cold weather alert for the coming weekend. Dr Thomas Waite, a Consultant in Health Protection at Public Health England, said: "The weather has felt much milder for the last week or so, but this weekend it is much colder again. That may come as a shock to the system for some whose bodies may struggle to cope in cold weather.

"It's worth remembering that cold temperatures – indoors and outdoors - can affect health, particularly in young children, older people and those with heart and lung conditions. So if you know someone in any of these groups, please keep an eye on them over the coming days make sure they're heating their homes to at least 18 °C and keeping an eye on the weather forecast."

Not everyone will see snow over the weekend, and the brightest and driest weather is expected in western Scotland. Longer daylight hours, stronger mid-March sunshine and a lack of pre-existing snow cover mean the impacts of this snowy spell will generally be less than the cold spell spanning late February and early March.

Looking ahead the weather will remain cold for Monday, but the risk of snow diminishes. As we head further into the week we begin to see a return to conditions more typical for mid-March.

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